

Semblance of the good and the evil

tête-à-tête Shagufta Kalim

AS A WRITER Jyothi Menon's strength probably lies in her ability to explore the many intricacies of the human mind. And she attributes this facet, to her "passion for people". The Chennai-based author has not deviated from her passion, while penning her first fictional work, titled *The Angel of God*, an interesting tale woven around men and their penchant for crime and power. It also narrates a human story that travels far and wide and touches upon many cultures and traditions.

"My father worked with Air India and thanks to his job, we travelled extensively, touching base in Indian metropolitans like Mumbai and Kolkata and also the quite corners of Kerala. It didn't stop there. We crossed continents, at one point living

in America and then landing in the ultra-conservative and petro-rich Saudi Arabia to Libya," she says.

"Every city has a tale of its own and a distinct identity. I simply loved adapting and blending with the new environment. The memories lingered in my mind, which is luckily like an all inclusive canvas. My book meanders back and forth this memory lane to create a very real backdrop about a story, that is best described as a figment of my imagination," she says. And the places, she missed acquainting so far, the inquisitive writer in her made sure, they were not left out.

"My research took me to Dharavi and from this bowel of poverty, the idea for the story germinated. The research continued for five years and next



Jyothi Menon

three were spent in penning it all down. I gave it my best shot and no surprises that it took eight years to give the finishing touches to this book," recalls Jyothi.

Hints of her debut book drawing inspirations from *Shantaram* are brushed aside. "I haven't read Gregory D. Roberts best-seller, *Angel of God* dwells on the power of human relations. It traces the semblance of both the good and the evil in Moosa, the protagonist and the people around him," she says.

Jyothi's deftful handling of the subject matter is not without reason: she has been working as a human resource professional since the last 15 years. And the expert has put her creative skills to good use even in that field. "Prior to *Angel of God*, I dabbled in non-fiction human resource-oriented writing and the result came in the form of three books. My debut book, *The Power of*



THE ANGEL OF GOD

By Jyothi Menon
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Human Relationships, hit the shelves in 2004, followed by *Brand Wise* and the 2006 release *Me, a Winner* was co-authored by my husband Bobby Menon. My efforts were well received and the first two tomes went for three editions," she says.

That's not all, the debutante author had then

received a note of appreciation from none other than then President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam for her first book, "It said that he has "read *Power of Human Relationships* and had liked it a lot. Currently, I am preparing the grounds for my fourth book based on leadership qualities," says a smiling Jyothi.

Coming to her present work, the book is getting a lot of positive response; interestingly it is also seen as a potential celluloid venture.

"A lot of the readers felt that the book has the perfect fodder for a film adaptation and there have been some offers on that line as well. Something concrete will work in that direction will emerge soon and if it happens I will be more than delighted," she hopes.

If *Angel of God* in its cinematic avatar succeeds in rewriting the *Slumdog Millionaire* story, we can simply wait and watch for the answer.